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MEDICAL

ESSAYS.

MEDICAL ESSAYS.

BY

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PHYSICIAN TO HIS MAJESTY's ARMY.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR T. DAVIES, RUSSEL-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN;
BOOKSELLER TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

M.DCC.LXXIII.

1st Edn.

312522

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MEDICAL ESSAYS.

ESSAY I.

Of THEORY.

THE ſlow progreſs which the art of phyſick has made from what may be called its commencement under *Hippocrates* to this preſent day, through a period of above two thouſand years, has in a great meaſure been owing to the vanity natural to mankind. Inſtead of attending to the various ſhapes of diſeaſes, and obſerving what remedies or methods of practice have been found the moſt effectual towards removing or relieving them; moſt writers upon the art of phyſick, eſpecially amongſt the moderns, have amuſed themſelves with accounting for the

phœnomena of the animal œconomy, of diſeaſes, and the operation of medicines: — to obſerve diſtinctly, with ſufficient attention and accuracy; and to reaſon judiciouſly from obſervation, is as much as the human faculties ſhould ever aſpire at in the practice of phyſick.

Why ſhould you teize and puzzle yourſelf to account for every thing in nature, like *Ariſtotle* or *Des Cartes?* You never can any more than they, or even *De Buffon* himſelf. You loſe that time, thoſe years, which ſhould be devoted to ſevere obſervation, in hunting after ſuch knowledge as you never can attain; and would probably be of little uſe if you could. The ſimple curs that run barking after the wild birds of heaven, are not much wiſer than ſuch philoſophers.

A plauſible theory is amuſing to young people. To them it is even a laudable amuſement; as it preſents them with a ſyſtematical view of diſeaſes, which they ſtudy with the more pleaſure and attention, that they ſuppoſe themſelves ſo far able to account for the myſteries of nature. But no man of ſenſe, and ſuch only can ever be a good phyſician, will long amuſe himſelf with the theory after engaging in the practice of the art. Yet how ridiculouſly have ſome celebrated writers wandered through different roads in a deſart of dreams and

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conjectures, in ſearch of a knowledge inacceſſible to the human powers, and uſeleſs to mankind?

What puzzling pains, for inſtance, have been taken to account for the ſecretions made by the different glands from the general maſs of blood! --- A new ſect of phyſicians, who explained all the phœnomena of the animal œconomy by the application of mathematicks, appeared towards the latter end of the laſt century. They made a great noiſe, and for ſome times theirs was the only philoſophy; but for want of a ſolid foundation it ſoon tumbled, and will hardly ever raiſe its head again. Thoſe mechanical phyſicians very *ingeniouſly* diſcovered, that the various ſecretions performed by the different glands, were owing to the different angles at which their arteries were detached from the *Aorta*. That by the various directions of thoſe arteries, the lighter or more ponderous, the mild or acrid, the balſamick or effœte particles of the blood, were determined into the glands which ſeparate each a particular fluid from the common maſs through its ſieve-like fabrick; which in this or that gland tranſmits only the ſphœrical or cubical or triangular or conical or cylindrical or pyramidical or paralelopipedal particles of the blood. Here you ſee the whole myſtery of glandular ſecretion explained at once. But you are as wide of the matter as ever for all that. You may puzzle yourſelf and blunder as long

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as you pleaſe about the anatomical apparatus of ſecretion, the laws of hydraulics, and heaven knows what, to no kind of purpoſe; except indeed, what is not to be deſpiſed, that your ſage and important *diſcoveries* may be received with great edification and applauſe by thouſands of gaping admirers. For my part, I am humbly of opinion, that every gland has an occult, a kind of magical power, inexplicable to the human faculties, of *transforming* the blood which paſſes through its fabrick into this or that particular humour. A power as little to be explained or conceived by us, as the mechanical ſtructure by which the numberleſs variety of plants from the ſame maſs of earth and water produces whatever is fragrant or fœtid, nutricious, medicinal, or poiſonous.

So much for glandular ſecretion. But here is a diſcovery of the utmoſt importance, --- the circulation of the blood, --- a real diſcovery, an indiſputable truth. Yet to what purpoſe? What improvement has the practice of phyſick received from this diſcovery? I believe, very little. For I ſuppoſe, that long before this great diſcovery was *compleated*, the cutting of an artery was known to be much more dangerous than the opening of a vein. What advantageous effects have been derived from this diſcovery to the art of curing diſeaſes? I am afraid, very few. For the practice of the ancient phyſicians,

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as far as the circulation of the blood is concerned, you would think muſt have been built upon the ſame reaſoning as if they had been perfectly acquainted with it.

To account for the operation of medicines has long been another object of impertinent and abſurd curioſity. --- Pray, how far would you go this way, if you could? Is it not ſufficient to know that rhubarb and jalap will purge, and ipecacuana vomit? You never will in this world diſcover by what means; any more than how ſleep is procured by opium; which would be a great bleſſing indeed, if it failed as ſeldom in giving comfortable repoſe as the common purges and emeticks do in their different provinces. It is ſurely enough for the phyſician to know the natural and uſual effects of the materials he employs: and the art of phyſick might by this time have been more advanced than it is, if its profeſſors had conſtantly attached themſelves to obſervation and cautious experiment; inſtead of loſing time in the vain purſuit of ſuch knowledge, ſuch myſteries as lie beyond the reach of the human powers; and into which all our attempts to penetrate are abſurd. In ſhort, to explain the phœnomena of nature beyond a certain line, we muſt humbly return to the honeſt, ancient, ineffectual expedient of *occult qualities*.

ESSAY II.

Of the INSTRUMENTS of PHYSICK.

THE great inſtruments of phyſick, excluſive of diet, exerciſe, and other articles of regimen; are evacuations by bleeding, vomiting, and bliſtering; evacuations by increaſing the natural diſcharges; and a few capital ſpecifick medicines, ſuch as opium, mercury, antimony, and the Pervuian bark. It is indeed probable, that nature, conſiſtent with her perpetual benignity, has produced a ſpecifick cure for every diſeaſe: but it will coſt the attention and experience of many thouſand years, in proportion to the ſmall advances that have hitherto been made in this part of ſcience, to complete it.

In the mean time there are many reaſons for ſuppoſing the moſt violent catharticks and emeticks, and even ſome poiſons, in ſmall doſes, the beſt alteratives: and as *their* number is by no means extravagant, they are more naturally objects of enquiry and experiment than the infinite variety of forage, for the moſt part eſculent, that covers the ſurface of the earth. The ſmall progreſs that has

has hitherto been made in this part of phyſick, has in ſome meaſure been owing to the abſurd vanity and quackery of mixing a variety of materials in the ſame powder, electuary, bolus or decoction; things that may perhaps counteract one another; and if any good follows, it muſt be a matter of doubt to which ingredient it is to be aſcribed. In preſcribing ſimples with whoſe powers you are already acquainted, you can often add ſomething that may aſſiſt their operation, or correct ſome diſagreeable quality attending them: but in trying a new medicine, which is only or chiefly to be done in the hoſpitals, compounding is abſurd.

After all, the few capital medicines with which we are acquainted, have been diſcovered by chance; to which we owe almoſt all valuable diſcoveries of whatever kind.

I cannot conclude this article of the inſtruments of phyſick, without taking notice of one that has for many years in this part of the world been in univerſal uſe. I mean the ſaline draught or mixture; which I take to be an excellent medicine, as it is commonly uſed in almoſt all fevers, and can hardly ever do much harm in any. Its neutral powers make it tolerably ſafe in ſuch hands as are not to be truſted with ſharp tools: and as far as a fever is to be ripened by time to its criſis, ſuch

a harmleſs compoſition will ſeldom counter-act the friendly efforts of nature. At the ſame time it may occaſionally be uſed as a not diſagreeable vehicle to medicines of greater efficacy.

ESSAY

ESSAY III.

Of Fevers.

THE moſt frequent as well as the moſt fatal of all the acute diſeaſes that have in the preſent age infeſted this part of Great Britain, are thoſe low languid fevers, which according to different ſymptoms are called nervous, or putrid, or malignant. Nervous, putrid, bilious, petechial or miliary, they are all of the malignant family; and in this great town theſe are almoſt the only fevers that have for many years prevailed, and do ſtill, to the great deſtruction of mankind. For, inflammatory fevers, or thoſe which attend an inflammation of ſome internal part; whether the lungs, the pleura, the diaphragm, the ſtomach, or any other of the viſcera, have for many years been remarkably rare; and have evidently given way to ſome of a more formidable and untractable kind.

In thoſe low torpid fevers, the vital powers are below the ſtandard of good health. The fever is not in any meaſure owing to a redundant quantity of generous blood; but to its fretful acrimony, which ſo far from being corrected, is rather increaſed by diminiſhing its

quantity. --- A loſs which nature in thoſe caſes does not eaſily bear.

The blood in theſe fevers is generally florid, and of a looſe conſiſtence; ſuch as it appears in hyſterical and maniacal diſorders. The pulſe has nothing of that firm fullneſs which is always to be wiſhed for in a fever. In ſhort, in theſe kind of fevers the ſolids ſeem for the moſt part relaxed into an indolent inactive ſtate, and the blood deprived of its wholeſom balſamick degree of viſcidity; as in the inflammatory fevers it errs upon the oppoſite extreme.

The inflammatory fevers, in which the *vis vitæ* is above the ſtandard of perfect health, are for the moſt part eaſily manageable; provided bleeding to a proper degree, and a cooling diluting regimen, is uſed from the beginning. This method I believe will ſeldom fail of ſucceſs; except when the inflammation has fixed itſelf upon ſome part, ſuppoſe it the lungs, that happens to be naturally weak, or has ſuffered from ſome accident, or ſome former ſhock; or is attended with ſome particular malignity. For it is no very difficult affair to moderate nature when the diſeaſe ariſes from a greater quantity of rich blood, and a more violent activity of the ſolids, than conſiſts with good health. But, to ſupport nature, or the vital powers, oppreſs'd and ſunk

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under an enfeebling poiſon; which ſeems to be the caſe in thoſe low dejecting fevers attended with an inſuperable langour, owing very likely to a ſeptic ſpirit, a deletereous *Gas* in the melted blood, advancing towards the ſtate of putrefaction, is a different affair. Sometimes theſe torpid fevers, in which that inſuperable weakneſs and proſtration of ſtrength is a conſtant ſymtom, are ſo contagious, and throw out ſuch eruptions upon the ſkin, as to emulate the genuine plague itſelf; to which they are hardly, if at all inferior in malignity.

Our fevers, excepting the ſmall-pox, the meaſles, and ſome intermittents, partaking it would ſeem of the irregularity of the climate, have ſeldom any critical days that the moſt attentive phyſician can either foreſee or perceive; but abate by inſenſible degrees, and without any ſuch critical evacuations as at once diſcharge the concocted materials of the diſeaſe. Here, in the common run of fevers, you dare ſeldom preſage on what day a criſis either ſalutary or fatal will happen. Whereas the phyſicians who practiſed above two thouſand years ago in Greece, could tell from the appearances of to-day what would happen the ſecond, the third, or the fourth day hence. Whether the fevers in theſe parts are as regular now as they muſt have been then, is a very natural object of curioſity. Meantime, the phyſicians

ficians in the north-weſt parts of Europe are in the right to be cautious in prognoſticating the event of a fever. Eſpecially as it ſometimes happens that, in a fever, while the pulſe is good, the tongue moiſt and clean, while not one alarming circumſtance appears, not even what is called the *pathognomonick* ſign of a fever --- a quick pulſe --- the patient tells you he is a dying; which he knows by ſome ſenſations not to be communicated. And generally after the firſt impulſe of what one may call theſe mortal warnings, he has not many hours to live.

ESSAY

ESSAY IV.

Of a few CAPITAL REMEDIES in FEVERS.

And first of BLEEDING.

IN all inflammatory fevers, bleeding to ſuch a degree as the patient can bear it, is the chief remedy. And in all inflammations of the internal parts there is no ſafety in any medicines or regimen whatever without plentiful bleeding---tho' ſome pretend that pleuriſies may be cured by the uſe of the ſeneca rattle-ſnake root alone. For my part I have no experience of it; and ſhould not chuſe in ſuch caſes to truſt to it, or any other medicine, alone. But if it prevents the fatal effects of that rapid and moſt violent poiſon, it muſt probably be good for ſome other medical purpoſes; and ſeems to deſerve the particular notice of the hoſpital phyſicians.

In inflammatory fevers the ſooner that plentiful bleeding is uſed the better. Boerhaave, if I don't miſtake, ſays, that in the pleuriſy it is too late to bleed after the fourth day, with any hopes of preventing a ſuppuration of the parts inflamed. Notwithſtanding the authority of that great man, to whoſe abilities and induſtry the world is much obliged, the very firſt time

I ſaw a pleuriſy I ventured at once to draw off ten or twelve ounces of blood; tho' the patient, a ſtrong labouring man, in the vigour of life, was now in the fifth day of the fever. This evacuation had ſo good an effect, that I repeated it according to the beſt of my judgment till all the ſymptoms of the diſeaſe were gone; and the patient was ſoon reſtored to perfect health. --- Upon conſidering this ſubject, it is natural to lament what numbers in the bloom of life have died of conſumptions, which might eaſily have been prevented by judicious and timely bleeding.

Meantime great miſchief has been done by bleeding in ſuppoſed pleuriſies. A worthy gentleman, who had for many years ſerved his country with great reputation and ſucceſs, in a very eminent ſtation at a foreign court, ſome few years ago came over to England in a valetudinary ſtate of health. His chief complaints were loſs of appetite, flatulencies, and irregularities in the diſcharges of the *primæ viæ*; which he dated from the time that he had ſeveral years before been *long* ill of a pleuriſy. Upon enquiring into the hiſtory of this *pleuriſy*, it appeared to have been a fix'd pain in the ſide, without either fever, or cough, or oppreſſion in breathing; in ſhort, that it could have been nothing but a rheumatick ſtitch, which might very probably have been removed by once cupping and bliſtering upon the part; inſtead of the repeated bleedings, which had brought

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on thoſe chronical complaints that not long ſince proved fatal to him.

But, without the leaſt pretence to bleed from pains not at all inflammatory; where, except in caſe of a *plethora*, or ſometimes of violent ſpaſms, bleeding at the beſt never does any good; much miſchief has been done by the injudicious, undiſtinguiſhing uſe of this evacuation: which is never neutral or indifferent; but where it does no good, can hardly ever fail to do miſchief. The firſt thing that is commonly done in a fever, is to let blood. --- If the patient is nothing better next day, if even worſe perhaps for his loſs of blood the day before, the bleeding is repeated --- becauſe it is a fever. And it is the moſt common of all fatal blunders, that in fevers, before the phyſician is called, the patient has been reduced by frequent bleeding to a ſtate of languor and weakneſs, from which it is impoſſible for all the power of phyſick to recover him. For it is not every apothecary, no nor every doctor neither, that knows when bleeding is proper, when not. The fevers that have for many years prevailed the moſt in this great town, are of the low lingering kind, which hardly bear once bleeding. And tho' things of this nature are by no means to be compared by the ſtrict rules of calculation, I am poſitive it is talking very much within bounds to ſay that many more Engliſhmen dye by the lancet at home, than by the ſword abroad.

ESSAY V.

Some OBSERVATIONS upon BLEEDING.

BLEEDING with the lancet is commonly the firſt thing done in all ſudden complaints: and indeed very properly in moſt accidents from contuſion; as in blows, falls, and all wounds where the diſcharge of blood is inconſiderable.

In theſe, as well as in all inflammatory caſes, this operation ought to be performed by a large inciſion; and in inflammatory fevers, for the firſt time at leaſt, eſpecially when the patient is young and vigorous, the diſcharge ſhould be continued till he ſwoons away, or is near fainting; which will much more readily happen from the loſs of a few ounces diſcharged ſuddenly, and in a few ſeconds, than of a large quantity drawn off ſlowly by a ſmall orifice in ſeveral minutes; and the deſired effect will be more conſiderable, at a much ſmaller expence of blood. In ſlow hæmorrhages what incredible quantities of blood are ſometimes diſcharged without the leaſt diſpoſition to grow faint? For as the blood ebbs off ſlowly, the veſſels by their elaſticity have time to collapſe in proportion, ſo as to continue conſtantly full; and the circulation proceeds without interruption.

ruption. But when even a ſmall quantity of blood is haſtily drawn off, and as it were at one guſh, the blood-veſſels are in a manner taken at a ſurpriſe; they have not time to contract themſelves ſo as to prevent ſome degree of inanition; the action and re-action between the ſolids and fluids is ſuſpended, the heart for a while ceaſes to move, and the circulation ſtops. Meantime, the ſeat of the inflammation, the obſtructed arteries, are relieved from the preſſure and violent motion of the blood. Theſe diſcharges repeated in proportion to the violence of the diſeaſe and ſtrength of the patient, the fever inſeparable from an inflammation ſubſides; the blood becoming thinner after every bleeding and leſs impetuous, the obſtructed capillaries, which without thus moderating the force of the blood muſt either have been melted down along with their contents in a ſuppuration, or ſuddenly torn to pieces by the violent motion of acrimonious blood, ſo as to produce a gangræne, are by degrees cleared of their barrs, and the inflammation is cured by a kindly ſolution.

To end this article of bleeding---If the blood that ſprung freely from a large orifice, after it is cooled, appears either florid and of a looſe conſiſtence, or of a flimſy mucilaginous texture, hold your hand; for in general there is more harm than good to be expected from repeated bleedings where the blood ſhews ſuch

appearances. But the phyſician muſt here be directed beſides, by the pulſe, the age and ſtrength of the patient, the violence of the diſeaſe, and the apparent effects whether good or bad of a former bleeding.

ESSAY

ESSAY VI.

Of Blistering

As far as my obſervation goes, bliſtering is of very little uſe by way of *ſtimulus* to the circulation in low fevers; even where attended with nervous ſymptoms, where generally the moſt is expected from it. In thoſe caſes it teizes and plagues the patient ſeldom to much purpoſe. But in a catarrhous fever a bliſter between the ſhoulders often gives great relief; as alſo in a pleuriſy, after cupping upon the part affected.

It is not the faſhion to bliſter upon the breaſt, the ſtomach, or the abdomen; but it is highly probable that many ſevere and dangerous complaints of the viſcera contained in thoſe parts might be greatly relieved if not removed by bliſtering upon them. At leaſt it might be worth while to try ſuch an experiment; eſpecially as there is nothing hazardous in it.

ESSAY VII.

Indicatio Vitalis :

Or, of CORDIALS in FEVERS.

IN thoſe moſt prenicious fevers, ſome of which are hardly leſs formidable than the plague itſelf; the ſpirits are ſunk, the patient is ſad, dejected, and labours under an inſuperable weakneſs. Theſe circumſtances naturally indicate the uſe of ſpiritous and cordial medicines; ſuch as the volatile ſalts, the warmeſt aromaticks, ſome of the moſt ſubtile and exalted animal ſubſtances, combined ſometimes with the great cordial opium. But wine and other fermented liquors I reckon the moſt effectual of all cordials in thoſe fevers; as they not only by a comfortable *ſtimulus* promote the circulation, and as powerful antiſepticks reſiſt putrefaction; but at the ſame time as they ſupply the vapid juices with materials eaſily aſſimilated into thoſe moſt ſubtile, generous, nutritious fluids by which life is ſupported.

The choice of theſe liquors is to be determined by the patient's taſte and inclination, and the ſymptoms attending the fever. For according to theſe, either

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ſome aſtringent wine, or ſome opening malt liquor, or cyder, or perry, or mead, may deſerve the preference. As to the quantity, it muſt be directed partly by the patient's inclination too, and his habit of living when in health. I have often in thoſe fevers, and to people habitually ſober, allowed a quart or three pints of ſtrong Madeira in different ſhapes every twenty-four hours; and have found that quantity, or ſometimes more, neceſſary to ſupport them through a low lingering fever, which I am perſuaded they could not otherways have weathered out.

I have many times found very happy effects in low torpid fevers from bathing the feet in hot water, and afterwards fomenting them with hot wine, or with ſpirit of wine. Any thing warm or hot applied to the extremities promotes the languid circulation of the blood. Wine, or fermented liquors of any kind, applied hot to thoſe parts, drank up by the abſorbent veſſels of the ſkin, re-inforce the blood with generous ſpirits. And where it is perhaps impoſſible for the faſtidious patient to ſwallow any thing either nutritious or cordial, the vapid and effœte blood may by theſe means be ſupplied from time to time with freſh ſpirits; till at laſt the creeping fever is ſubdued by the ſuperiour vigour of nature.

ESSAY VIII.

Of VENTILATION and FRESH AIR in FEVERS.

A Conſtant circulation of freſh air is ſo neceſſary, ſo important in fevers, and all feveriſh diſorders, that it ought to be particularly conſidered in the conſtruction of all houſes. It would be well if, in all the apartments of every houſe, but more eſpecially in the bed-chambers, the upper ſaſhes of every window were contrived to let down. For by this means the admiſſion of freſh air would at all times be perfectly ſafe, except during a raw damp foggy night; as the body, even while under ſuch a ſweat as could not without danger be interrupted, may receive all the refreſhing, reſtorative, and invigorating influences of the air, without being expoſed to a ſtream of it. Meantime, where this conveniency is wanting, the beſt method to ſupply it is by drawing the bed-curtains cloſe now and then for a few minutes at a time; while a free paſſage is made to the foul air by opening the doors and windows.

The great importance of freſh air in fevers is not ſufficiently conſidered. The worſt fevers, thoſe that approach the neareſt to the peſtilence, might very probably be

be produced in a very ſhort time by cramming a number of people in perfect health into a cloſe room. The noxious vapours that fill a ſick room, eſpecially in ſome fevers, are not only offenſive but dangerous to thoſe who continue in it for any time. If dangerous to people in health, how detrimental muſt they be to one oppreſt and ſtruggling under an enfeebling diſeaſe; and ready to expire with inſuperable langours! --- It is a common thing in a campaign to diſtribute the ſick ſoldiers, amongſt whom theſe malignant fevers prevail, in open barns; where the putrid volatile poiſon is in a ſhort time diſſipated. And in ſuch ſituations it is ſurpriſing how ſoon they find a relief from the moſt threatning ſymptoms; and recover from circumſtances which had they been carefully ſhut up in a cloſe room muſt have proved fatal.

This ſubject naturally enough leads me to conſider the article of cleanlineſs; which is ſurely of great conſequence in fevers of every kind. Apprehenſions of catching cold from ſhifting have too long prevailed in the management of the ſick in fevers. But ſurely nothing can be more abſurd than this delicate fear of clean linnen. When the body is oppreſt and enfeebled with a dangerous fever, it is taking part with the diſeaſe to expoſe it to reſorb the noxious *effluvia* which nature had kindly diſcharged; and whoſe virulent acrimony,

by

by irritating the ſkin, increaſes or often rather occaſions that reſtleſneſs which is one of the moſt diſtreſsful and moſt diſadvantageous ſymptoms of a fever. But I hope it is needleſs to enlarge upon the inconveniences and dangers of naſtineſs. At leaſt I'll venture to ſay, that there is never any danger in clean linnen, provided it is perfectly dry, and put on warm.

ESSAY

ESSAY IX.

Of Bathing in Fevers.

As the advantages of freſh air in fevers are not generally conſidered with due attention; as this univerſal cordial of nature, without which we cannot live one moment, is even very ſcrupulouſly admitted to the ſick when they need it the moſt; it is no wonder that the cold bath has all this time been ſo little thought of as a febrifuge. Yet *cool* and *cold* I take to be two capital antiſepticks; and where *freſh air* is not ſufficient, *cold water* may be worth trying, or at leaſt conſidering.

It is a common practice amongſt the *Ruſſians* to go out of a hot room all in a ſweat and throw themſelves into the ſnow; with a view of tempering their bodies like ſteel, and rendering them more hardy. In ſome parts of *North-America*, according to *Charlevoix*, it is uſual for the natives to plunge into the river when they find themſelves ill of a fever. And there are inſtances at home of people in a fever who having eſcaped from their nurſes had plunged into the ſnow; to which, very poſſibly, they owed their recovery. It happens

very often in fevers, that the ſick become ſo impatient of confinement, that it is next to impoſſible to keep them in bed. One would not directly conſider this as a hint from nature in favour of the cold bath. But, it ſeems to be no bad reaſon for gradually indulging the gaſping and almoſt ſuffocated patient in all the luxuries of freſh air that can ſafely be admitted.

But ſuppoſe ſuch hints as theſe could recommend experiments of this practice in fevers; what phyſician will hazard his reputation upon their ſucceſs? Such trials could not with propriety be ſet on foot but by the authority and ſupport of the legiſlature; as the moſt proper objects of ſuch experiments are naturally thoſe unhappy creatures who have forfeited their lives for trifling thefts and bloodleſs robberies.

In moſt fevers that are not inflammatory it appears that the ſolids are in a ſtate of relaxation. The grand febrifuge, the *Peruvian* bark, is generally ſuppoſed to operate by bracing and ſtrengthening the ſolids. Where this fails, why ſhould not the cold bath, as a ſtill more powerful remedy of the ſame kind, be tried? Eſpecially where there are no particular reaſons to apprehend any tender debility, or obſtructions in the inward parts; in which laſt caſe the bark too is generally avoided. Meantime, in uſing the cold bath as a febrifuge, it would be

be highly neceſſary, by a ſufficient quantity of ſome generous cordial, to fortify and ſupport the vital powers, againſt a ſhock whoſe conſequence muſt be conſidered as very doubtful, till its ſucceſs has been aſcertained by a great number of experiments. And where any particular danger is apprehended from the weight and preſſure of the water upon the ſurface, forcing more than their common portion of blood all at once upon unſound or too tender viſcera; all the purpoſes that are to be expected from immerſion by promoting the oſcillatory motions of the fibrous ſyſtem, or by the application of the cold element as an antiſeptick, may be attained by ſquirting the body over with cold water, either freſh or ſalt, or ſponging it haſtily with whatever degree of friction may be proper. Any perſon of a turn to mechanicks could eaſily contrive an apparatus by which theſe operations might be ~~eaſily~~ readily, conveniently, and ſafely performed. And by ſuch means perhaps all the advantages to be expected from the cold bath in fevers, might be procured without either real danger, or the ſhocking apprehenſions of it from the formidable circumſtance of plunging.

In inflammatory fevers this practice to be ſure is quite out of the queſtion; for no man in his ſenſes would ever think of uſing the cold bath in any ſhape, when the vital powers are already too violent. One would

would not be in a hurry to try the hot, or even the warm bath, in thoſe fevers. But there are fevers of the low kind in which they might probably be uſed with ſome ſucceſs. Warm, or hot baths, impregnated with aromatick vegetables, with ſpiritous and fermented liquors, amongſt which I include vinegar, ſeem to be very proper objects of experiment in ſuch caſes.

For my part, I have no experience of the uſe of baths either cold, hot, or warm, of ſea, ſalt, or freſh water, in any kind of fevers. But there can at leaſt be no great harm in pointing out a field, that as far as fevers are concerned, and our intelligence extends, has hitherto lain almoſt intirely neglected; tho' very poſſibly it might be cultivated to ſome advantage.

ESSAY

ESSAY X.

Of LONGINGS in FEVERS.

ALL animals are directed by their various appetites to the food that ſuits them the beſt. And in the human race, which lives upon every thing eatable, I reckon the taſte the moſt infallible guide as to the choice of wholeſom fare. There are no general obſervations without exceptions, but here I believe there are few; and thoſe ſo very obvious to the notice of every individual, that his own experience will ſoon teach him that tho' he *likes* milk or honey, they don't agree with him.

In all diſeaſes, but chiefly in fevers, the utmoſt attention ought to be paid to the appetite; eſpecially if it amounts to what is properly called a longing. If the patient longs for a draught of wine, punch, or beer, humour him for once; if for a draught of cold water, don't refuſe it. The phyſicians of antient *Greece* uſed at the criſis of a fever to adminiſter cold water in great quantities. Our fevers are in general ſo irregular, that it is ſeldom poſſible to calculate the critical day. Perhaps the patient's eagerneſs for ſomething particular to

eat or drink, may be the principal or only notice you can have of it. If his fancy is indulged --- let it appear ever ſo extravagant --- if you gratify his longings, he is happy. From being reſtleſs and impatient for want of what he hankers after, and to what nature directs him, as ſoon as his eager demands are gratified, he commonly falls into a profound ſleep, and the fever goes off in a kindly ſweat.

It appears highly probable that this paſſionate appetite for ſomething to eat or drink, coming on after the languid patient has perhaps for many days loathed all nouriſhment, proceeds from a ſalutary kind of inſtinct: by properly obſerving and humouring of which, nature exhauſted and ſubdued is furniſhed with a freſh re-inforcement of invigorating juices to puſh on the criſis, and ſupport her under a ſudden diſcharge of humours, which, peccant as they are, might prove a loſs ſhe could not otherways eaſily bear. Meantime, theſe cravings, however violent, ought always to be indulged with moderation and by degrees; that the languid flame of life may not be extinguiſhed under a load of freſh fuel. --- As to a *falſe appetite*, it is a common phraſe without any meaning; except when uſed in the caſe of a languid patient, who fancies he could eat ſome particular thing, and when it comes he can't touch it.

To

To conclude, I am of opinion that many have died of fevers for want of properly attending to thoſe longings, and prudently indulging them. For, to balk them while nature is in a tickliſh ſituation between life and death, and cannot bear the leaſt diſadvantage, may eaſily prove fatal. To amuſe a poor exhauſted creature, dying perhaps for a morſel of ham or ſmoak'd beef, with chicken water, or beef tea, is mortally tantalizing, and abſurd to the laſt degree. Yet I have heard of ſuch well meaning ill-judged ſeverities; but never how far they have been practiſed without proving fatal.

After all, why ſo timid and ſcrupulous to indulge a raging appetite in ſuch caſes? --- Conſider only to what longings for ſtrange, and even what you would think, abſurd things, the women are often ſubject during their pregnancy. For inſtance, what incredible quantities of ſtrong liquors the moſt ſober women have been known to ſwallow upon thoſe occaſions, without ſuffering the leaſt degree of intoxication! --- If they are diſappointed of what they long for, let it ſeem ever ſo whimſical or ridiculous, the common conſequence is a miſcarriage. And at the criſis of a formidable fever, where the balance is perhaps rather againſt the patient, may not the conſequence of ſuch a diſappointment very naturally be death?

ESSAY XI.

Some THOUGHTS on the GOUT and RHEUMATISM.

NOTWITHSTANDING a doctrine that has long prevailed in the moſt celebrated ſchools of phyſick, that nothing acid exiſts in the human blood; I cannot help venturing to imagine, that an acrimony of that kind, call it if you pleaſe a ſub-acid acrimony, may lye lurking in the gout: a diſeaſe that ſeems originally to ſpring from crudity, and an imperfect digeſtion of the aliments in the ſtomach.

Amongſt other reaſons that lead me to this opinion, or rather conjecture, one is that what is called the heart-burn, from an acid in the ſtomach, is a common complaint with people ſubject to the gout. --- Another, that the drinkers of ſtrong ſtale beer, rough cyder, and other acid liquors, are the moſt liable to this diſeaſe. And in gouty people two or three glaſſes of punch, which from its compoſition cannot fail to be a very penetrating acid, are often within a few minutes felt in the joints.

This

This opinion, as far as it may deſerve any notice, beſides a particular attention to the condition of the ſtomach, and the other *organs* employed in the important office of digeſting the crude aliments into good chyle, indicates an antacid diet, and medicines the moſt powerful in neutraliſing of acids, --- particularly the alcaline ſalts, whether fix'd or volatile.

But the moſt effectual ſubduer of all crudities, whether acid, aceſcent, or phlegmatic, in the firſt digeſtion or in the blood, is conſtant exerciſe, and a laborious life; which, except in the intervals, is impracticable to thoſe who are already afflicted with this painful malady. Meantime, as it is eaſier to prevent a diſeaſe, than to cure it; a life of much exerciſe, with a particular regard to diet as to eating and drinking, is to be recommended to thoſe who have reaſon to be apprehenſive of any original diſpoſition to gouty complaints: and it argues ſtrongly in favour of an active laborious life towards preventing, if not curing, the gout, that it very rarely affects hard-working people.

The *Rheumatiſm*, tho' ſometimes miſtaken for the gout, is quite a different diſeaſe. The inflammatory rheumatiſm, attended with an acute fever, is to be managed, like other inflammatory diſeaſes, with bleeding and a cool regimen. But there is a chronical rheuma-

tiſm, that ſhifts from joint to joint, from one part to another; and is perhaps the moſt univerſal of all the diſeaſes endemick to this iſland. It commonly rages the moſt in cold, raw, damp weather, or when the wind is eaſterly; and towards the evening, and throughout the night. It gives intervals of eaſe without any regular periods, except in ſome rare caſes, when it is to be treated as a tertian, or any other intermittent fever; and even when it fixes itſelf in the hip-joint, which one might call its citadel; as there it is more impregnable than any other ſituation; and ſometimes has been known to remain obſtinate for whole years againſt all the efforts of phyſick; the patient, I ſay, even in that caſe, who goes out lame in the morning, ſhall be able to walk home without the leaſt pain in the afternoon. And theſe changes from pain to eaſe, and from eaſe to pain, are ſometimes ſo ſudden, and appear ſo unaccountable, that I have heard ſenſible people compare them to the ſuppoſed effects of witchcraft.

This wandering rheumatiſm, according to my obſervation, is particularly incident to thoſe who are liable to a tormenting trifle, as one may call it; a crop of little fretful ulcers that from time to time break out on the inſide of the cheeks, the lips, and about the tip and edges of the tongue. Thoſe ſmall bliſters, which diſcharge nothing but a little acrid lymph, are extremely

extremely painful; they are the moſt troubleſome in raw damp weather, and when the wind is eaſterly; in the evening, and throughout the night. After a long or ſhort teizing viſit, they ſometimes take an abrupt leave; and return again as unexpectedly as they went; according to the weather and other circumſtances.

The dry piles is another tormenting complaint to which rheumatick people are often ſubject; and this ſometimes, as well as thoſe little ulcers in the mouth, rages alternately with fits of the rheumatiſm. This kind of piles is the moſt troubleſome in hard dry weather from the eaſt, or in a cold moiſt ſeaſon; and is commonly the moſt violent in the night time while the patient lies abed.

To compare theſe obſervations; is it not probable enough that the ſame kind of excoriations, or little ulcers, that give ſo much pain in the inſide of the mouth, are often upon the internal ſurface of the *rectum*, and particularly within the *ſphincter ani*, the cauſe of the dry piles; and that the ſame kind of ulcers ſcattered about the ligaments, of the joints, and the ſenſible membranes that brace the muſcles and tendons, may often be the cauſe of that wandering rheumatiſm, which ſometimes proves ſo obſtinate againſt all the common methods of practice?

The

The tooth-ach belongs to the rheumatiſm. Its attacks are the moſt frequent in cold damp weather, and are generally moſt violent in the night time.--- Dr. Arbuthnot, I believe it is in his book upon aliments, wiſhes he could account for the throbbing of a corn before rain, or in certain kinds of weather. --- Corns I take to be ſprouts of the rheumatiſm, and not the offspring of mere preſſure. They rage in the ſame kind of weather, the ſame time of the day, the evening, with the ulcers in the mouth; and give the ſame kind of burning pain with the chronical rheumatiſm.

A gentleman who had long been ſubject to fits of the wandering rheumatiſm, which had obliged him to leave off the uſe of punch; had at laſt, by a ſucceſsful management, enjoyed ſuch a long interval of eaſe, that he pleaded hard to be indulged in the moderate uſe of his favourite liquor: which was the more readily granted that it happened to be in the heat of ſummer. But he had only for a few weeks enjoyed this indulgence, when a corn puſhed out on the bottom of the ball of the great toe, and was ſoon ſurrounded with a crop of ſmall corns. It tormented him, he ſaid, with the ſame kind of burning fretful pain he uſed to feel from the rheumatiſm; was the moſt troubleſome towards the evening, and in the ſame kind of weather in which he uſed to find the rheumatick pains the moſt violent.

The

The great corn, with the circle of ſmall excreſcencies in which it was ſet, were deſtroyed by a gentle cauſtick. About the ſame time there aroſe an inflammatory tumour upon the fleſh that borders the nail of one of the fingers; out of which, ſoon after the inflammation had ſubſided, there came a hard round core, about as big as a grain of rape-ſeed; which upon a part expoſed to hard preſſure, like the foot, would I ſuppoſe have become the *nucleus* of a corn.

But enough of this at preſent; and what further obſervations or conjectures upon medical ſubjects the writer of theſe Eſſays may venture to expoſe to the public, muſt be deferred till he happens to be taken ill of another ſcribbling fit.

Meantime, he does not ſend out theſe little Eſſays by way of a Quack's bill.--- Upon honour he does not.--- For he has not the leaſt inclination to extend his practice beyond the circle of a few friends and acquaintances; amongſt whom he commonly finds ſufficient employment to ſecure him from the melancholy langour of idleneſs, and the remorſe that in ſome minds muſt naturally haunt a life of diſſipation.--- Tho' he could neither tell a heap of impudent lies in his own praiſe, wherever he went; nor intrigue with nurſes; nor aſſociate, much leſs aſſimilate, with the various knots of pert inſipid, lively ſtupid, well-bred

impertinent, good-humoured malicious, obliging deceitful, waſhy, drivelling, Goſſips; nor enter into *juntos* with people that were not to his liking; it will not appear a mighty boaſt to any one that is but moderately acquainted with this overgrown town to ſay, that he might have done *great things* in phyſick.--- Moſt certainly he could --- But that his Ambition had a great many years ago received a fatal check from a tickliſh ſtate of ſpirits, that made him afraid of a Buſineſs in which he found himſelf expoſed to much anxiety, and a croud of teizing uncomfortable mortifying circumſtances; to be encountered at all hours, and in every kind of weather. But for that diſtempered exceſs of ſenſibility he might have been as much renowned as almoſt any *Quack*--- notwithſtanding even his having imprudently publiſhed a ſyſtem of what every body allows to be ſound Phyſick --- only indeed that it was in verſe. However, it is well that ſome particular people never reckoned him the worſe phyſician for all that.--- And, as it is become the faſhion to praiſe ones ſelf --- Tho' he does not ſay that *none of his patients die*; he has ſome reaſon to believe, that in proportion to numbers, whether from ſkill or good-luck, not many phyſicians have been more ſucceſsful in the management of dangerous and difficult caſes. --- Moſt probably indeed from good-luck; as he has never been

remark-

remarkable for it in any thing elſe. --- In the meantime he has heard that his character, as a phyſician, has been ungenerouſly nibbled at by people of his own profeſſion; which he underſtands has had its intended effect upon ſome gentry, who it ſeems are too ſhallow in the knowledge of human nature, of mankind, and even of the world, to have obſerved that people of the ſame buſineſs are *ſometimes* not very fond of one another; and that to be an object of detraction in ſuch caſes is no ſign of inferiour abilities. However, to comfort and ſupport himſelf under the dark hints of ſuch illiberal enemies; it is natural for him to recollect that there are *ſtill ſome Gentlemen* of the faculty, who have candour and generoſity enough amongſt themſelves to give him all reaſonable credit, even as a phyſician. But the lies of malice are more liſtened to, and circulate much faſter, than the fair reports of good-nature.

So much at preſent for his hiſtory as a Phyſician. --- As an Author too his fate has been ſomewhat particular.---His having written a Poem upon a ſubject reckoned of no inconſiderable conſequence to the health of mankind was, as ſome ſay, ſufficient alone in this age and meridian, to have ruined him as a Phyſician. At the ſame time, from the treachery of one Bookſeller after another, it is true enough what one of his friends gueſſed not long ago --- that tho' his works, as he

called

called them, had *ſold greatly*; he did not believe they had all together brought him near ſo much as has often been made by one play that deſerved to have been damned.

To put an end to this detail of misfortunes and complaints, in which the public is very little intereſted -- That his long ſufferance and contemptuous ſilence may not for ever, by the moſt muddy wits, be miſtaken for an acquieſence in the *ſevere* decrees pronounced againſt him by certain *Criticks*; who in *monthly*, *weekly*, and *daily* publications inſtruct the reading world as to the merits of every new work that comes from the preſs; from a bloated motley hiſtory *of ſhreds and patches*, that with much dignity and importance torpidly crawls out upon all four, to a dry chip of an ode, a *ſad* elegy, or a *moſt lamentable* monody; he finds himſelf at laſt in the humour to *proteſt* againſt the *ſevere* reprehenſions with which thoſe *ſaid criticks* have, from time to time, for many years grievouſly mortified and ſorely afflicted him. It is true they have never, as far he knows, attacked him except with general abuſe; which is juſt as much Criticiſm as calling names is Satire. --- But one needs only glance over a few ſpecimens of their dry, barren, heavy labours, to diſcover that thoſe ridiculous Dictators have neither taſte, nor learning, nor candour.--- They are deſpiſed by all people of ſenſe and taſte.---And

when

when they come to be dragged out of that cowardly obſcurity under whoſe ſhelter, in the true black-guard ſpirit of the mob, they inſult and throw dirt at their ſuperiours; they will be hooted, hiſs'd, and hallooed by the very multitude they have long miſled, in recommending the worſt, and abuſing the beſt productions. This dim and dark conſtellation of Geniuſes appears to be chiefly compoſed of raw young people of low education; who praiſe or condemn by the lump, as they are directed by their Maſters *in the trade*, or their own malice and ſtupidity. And ſome ſay, that it is no uncommon thing with thoſe *candid criticks* to paſs ſentence againſt a new performance, without the ceremony of giving it a few minutes poring peruſal of a *lack-luſtre eye*. --- Such are the *Criticks* who *modeſtly* pretend to dictate to the publick upon ſubjects of which themſelves have not the leaſt knowledge or taſte. --- Such are the Judges who have uſurped the vacant Tribunal of Criticiſm. --- But ſuch Judges have in effect only conſtituted themſelves THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF KING MIDASES BENCH.

The E N D.

A

LECTURE

INTRODUCTORY TO THE

THEORY and PRACTICE

OF

MIDWIFERY.